

# **Ethics Briefing for AFMC Enlisted Personnel**

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# **Topics**

- **Use of government e-mail & Internet**
- **Off-duty employment**
- **Fundraising by private organizations**
- **Gift from outside sources**
- **Travel-related gifts**
- **Use of government travel card**

# **Government E-Mail & Internet**

- **Government e-mail & Internet may be used for:**
  - **Official business, OR**
  - **Personal purposes under certain conditions and with supervisor approval**
- **To approve use of govt. e-mail and/or Internet for personal purposes, supervisor must be:**
  - **A commissioned military officer, OR**
  - **A civilian employee GS-12 or above (JER ¶ 1-202 & 2-301a(2))**

# **E-Mail & Internet -- Authorized Personal Use**

- **Government e-mail & Internet may be used for personal purposes if supervisor determines:**
  - **No adverse effect on performance of duty,**
  - **Use is of reasonable duration & frequency,**
  - **Use serves legitimate public interest,**
  - **Use does not reflect adversely on Air Force,**
  - **Use does not overburden the system, and**
  - **Use does not create significant additional cost (JER ¶ 2-301a(2))**

# **E-Mail & Internet -- Examples of Permissible Personal Uses**

- **Communications that are most reasonably made at the workplace, such as:**
  - **Checking in with spouse or children**
  - **Scheduling doctor or auto appointments**
- **Communications between deployed personal & their families**
- **Uses that improve professional skills, such as PME (JER ¶ 2-301a(2))**

# **E-Mail & Internet -- Prohibited Uses**

- **Government e-mail & Internet may not be used:**
  - **In violation of copyright laws,**
  - **For personal financial gain,**
  - **To misrepresent one's personal identity,**
  - **To access or send harassing or offensive material, including pornography,**
  - **If it would cause congestion on the network, or**
  - **With someone else's UserID without authority (JER ¶ 2-301a(2); AFI 33-119 ¶ 3.3.1.1)**

# **E-Mail & Internet -- Recent Developments**

- **On 20 Nov 00, AFMC issued a supplement to the AFI on Internet use, which states that private organizations (such as Top 3 or Chiefs' Group) may have an informational website on the government server, if approved by installation CC**
- **On 29 Nov 00, HQ USAF General Law Division issued a legal opinion that states:**
  - **Supervisors (who are commissioned officers or GS-12 or above) may approve limited use of govt. e-mail & Internet for job hunting**
  - **Printing resumes on govt. printer & sending broadcast e-mail messages is not permitted**

# **Off-Duty Employment (ODE)**

- **Joint Ethics Regulation requires DoD employees (military & civilian) to get prior approval of ODE if (1) the employee is required to file a financial disclosure report, and (2) the employment is with a “prohibited source” (e.g., a DoD contractor)**
- **Off-duty employment may be disapproved only if:**
  - **It is prohibited by statute or regulation,**
  - **It would detract from readiness, OR**
  - **It would create a security risk**
- **AF personnel use AF Form 3902 to get approval**



# **Off-Duty Employment -- AFMC Policy**

- **AFMC Instruction (AFMCI) 51-201, 9 Aug 00, requires all AFMC employees (military & civilian) to get prior approval of off-duty employment**
- **When AFMCI 51-201 was negotiated with AFGE Council 214, it was agreed that AFMCI 51-201 would apply to members of the bargaining unit, as modified by the following provisions:**
  - **Employees will report ODE to their immediate supervisor using the AF Form 3902**
  - **Management will complete the form in order to acknowledge receipt of the form, and will give the employee a copy of the completed form within two work days**

# **Off-Duty Employment -- Business Ventures with Subordinates**

- **Air Force members generally should not enter into business ventures with members who are junior in rank, grade or position. (AFI 36-2909, Professional and Unprofessional Relationships, 1 May 99, ¶ 3.7)**
- **Air Force civilian employees generally should not enter into business ventures with their supervisor or with employees under their supervision. (AFI 36-703, Civilian Conduct and Responsibility, 1 Aug 99, ¶ 8.2.3)**

# **Fundraising by Private Organizations**

- **The Air Force Instruction (AFI) on base-affiliated private organizations (such as Top 3 or Chiefs' Group) states that such organizations may be permitted to have fundraisers on base on an “occasional” basis (AFI 34-223 ¶ 10.9)**
- **Interim Change 99-1 to AFI 34-223, dated 3 Dec 99, defines “occasional” as “not more than two (2) fund-raising events per calendar quarter”**

# **Gifts from Outside Sources -- General Rules**

- **DoD employees (military & civilian) may not accept gifts:**
  - **Offered because of their official position, OR**
  - **From a “prohibited source” (DoD contractor)**
- **There are 9 items that are excluded from the definition of a “gift,” and there are 21 exceptions to the general ban on accepting gifts**
- **Gifts to relatives -- because of their relationship with you -- are considered to be gifts to you**

# **Gifts -- Exclusions from the Definition of a “Gift”**

- **Modest items of food & drink not part of a meal (e.g., coffee, soft drinks, donuts, hors d’oeuvres)**
- **Items with little intrinsic value intended solely for presentation (e.g., plaques, certificates & trophies)**
- **Opportunities & benefits offered to the public, to all government employees, or to all military personnel (such as a “military discount” for airline or hotel)**

## **Gifts from Outside Sources -- \$20 / \$50 Rule**

- **DoD employees (military & civilian) may accept gifts up to \$20 in value at one time (but never cash or investments)**
- **Gifts from one source (e.g., one company) may not exceed \$50 in value in a calendar year**
- **You may not “buy down” a gift to \$20, i.e., pay \$5 and then accept a gift worth \$25**

# **Government Frequent Flyer Miles -- Permissible Uses**

- **Frequent flyer miles that are earned as a result of official travel belong to the government**
- **You may use such miles to obtain:**
  - **A ticket that is used in government travel,  
or**
  - **An upgrade to business class on govt. travel**

# **Government Frequent Flyer Miles -- Prohibited Uses**

- **You may not use frequent flyer miles that are earned as a result of official travel for:**
  - **Personal travel,**
  - **Permissive TDY travel,**
  - **Upgrade to first class on government travel,**
  - **Gift to charity,**
  - **Magazine subscription for your govt. agency,**
  - **Travel after leaving government service,  
OR**
  - **Any other purpose**



# **Overbooked Flights -- The Involuntary Bump**

- **If you are involuntarily bumped from an overbooked flight on official travel, any compensation you receive belongs to the government**
- **Benefits received as a result of an involuntary bump must be turned in to the government**

# **Overbooked Flights -- The Voluntary Bump**

- **If you are on official travel, and your flight is overbooked, and the airline asks for volunteers to take a later flight, you may volunteer to take the later flight, as long as doing so does not interfere with the mission**
- **You may keep the compensation the airline pays you for taking the later flight, as long as taking the later flight does not result in any additional cost to the government. For example, you may not claim extra per diem for the extra time you spent away from home because you took the later flight**

# **Government Travel Card -- General Rules**

- **Federal employees are required to use the government travel card to pay for certain expenses of official travel**
- **For DoD personnel, the requirement to use the card went into effect on 1 May 2000**
- **The card may be used for some travel-related expenses that are not reimbursable**
- **The card may not be used to pay for expenses that are not related to official travel**

# **Government Travel Card -- Exemptions**

- **GSA exempted eight types of travel costs from the requirement to use government travel card:**
  - **Expenses from vendors that don't take card**
  - **Laundry & dry cleaning**
  - **Parking**
  - **Local transportation system fares**
  - **Taxi fares**
  - **Tips**
  - **Meal charges when use of card is impractical (such as when dining as a group)**
  - **Phone calls, when govt. calling card available**

# **Government Travel Card -- More Exemptions**

- **DoD added two more types of travel costs that are exempt from the requirement to use the govt. travel card. [See USD(C) Memo dated 18 Feb 00]**
  - **All expenses covered by the “meals and incidentals” portion of the per diem allowance**
  - **All local and long distance calls**
- **“The result of these exemptions is that the card must be used only for transportation, lodging, and rental cars though it can be used for other charges associated with government travel.” (SECAF Memo, “Mandatory Travel Card Policy,” 17 Apr 00, Atch 1, para. B2)**

# **Travel Card -- Non-Reimbursable Expenses**

- **DoD Financial Mgmt. Reg. (DoD 7000.14-R), Vol. 9, Chap. 3, para. 030607, says card may be used for:**
  - **“[N]on-reimbursable incidental travel expenses such as rental movies, personal telephone calls, exercise fees, and beverages, when these charges are part of a room billing or meal and are reasonable.”**
  - **“[P]ersonal lodging or car rental charges, incurred in conjunction with otherwise authorized official travel expenses, when such charges are an inte-gral part of the billing for the period spent at the temporary duty location while on official travel.”**